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Cornelis Hoogerwerf

Proving the Resurrection of the Flesh

The Use of Natural Philosophy and Galenic Epistemology in Pseudo-Justin’s *De Resurrectione*

The treatise *De resurrectione*, which has survived under the name of Justin Martyr in some extensive fragments, is an exponent of a larger debate about the resurrection in the second and the early third centuries.¹ The fact that resurrection is one of the first theological subjects to which entire writings are devoted, says a lot about the centrality of this topic within the development of Christianity.² For Greek intellectuals like Celsus it was a clear example of the barbaric and flesh-bound character of the Christian religion, while within the various currents of Christianity resurrection received vastly different interpretations. Its distinctiveness and its capacity to harbour fundamental questions of existence led to the situation that the right under-

¹ This article is a revision and elaboration of parts of my master thesis: *The Debate about the Resurrection around 180 CE and the ‘Hellenization’ of Christianity* (Leiden University, 2014).

² The development of the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh was studied by H.E. Lona, *Über die Auferstehung des Fleisches: Studien zur frühchristlichen Eschatologie*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 66 (Berlin, 1993). See also Katharina Schneider, *Studien zur Entfaltung der altkirchlichen Theologie der Auferstehung*, Hereditas 14 (Bonn, 1999).

standing of the doctrine became an identity marker of the true Christian.³ In sociological terms, not having the right opinion about this matter was a clear sign of deviance from the group.⁴ At the same time, the deviance of the idea of the resurrection of the flesh from the dominant intellectual culture could be turned into an advantage. In the conclusion of *De resurrectione* the resurrection of the flesh is advertised as a unique selling point of Christianity, ‘a new and strange hope’ that distinguishes Christ from Plato and Pythagoras. In this way the author of the treatise attempts to persuade his intended audience: the ‘weak’ who stay at the border of his group, those who are at risk leaving or who are dissuaded from joining. The strategy to protect the identity of the social group (namely urging those who are less prototypical group members to conform to the norms) is complemented by the strategy of clearly marking those who seem members, but have the wrong opinion, as outsiders,

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belonging to the camp of the enemy. The author takes up arms against ‘the adversary’, ‘the ruler of wickedness’ and his apostles.⁵

In recent research, scholars have suggested various candidates for the authorship of *De resurrectione*: Hippolytus of Rome (early third century),⁶ Athenagoras (around 180 CE),⁷ and ‘Deutero-Justin’ (late second century, before 211/212 CE).⁸ As these hypotheses have been formulated independently of each other, it is safe to assume that *De resurrectione* was written somewhere in the period from the latter decades of the second century to the early third century CE. Most of the objections against the resurrection of the flesh that are mentioned, are also known from other sources in this

³ W.C. van Unnik, ‘The Newly Discovered Gnostic “Epistle to Rheginos” on the Resurrection: II’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 15 (1964), 153–167, at 154 and 164. Claudia Setzer, *Resurrection of the Body in Early Judaism and Early Christianity: Doctrine, Community and Self-Definition* (Boston, 2004), 76–77, 84–86.

⁴ For the sociological concept of deviance and the strategies used in this context see Outi Lehtipuu, *Debates over the Resurrection of the Dead: Constructing Early Christian Identity* (Oxford, 2015), 67–108.

⁵ Pseudo-Justin, *De resurrectione* 1.12; 10.7–12. The edition of the text used in this article is *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung: Text und Studie*, ed. Martin Heimgartner, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 54 (Berlin, 2001), 102–131.

⁶ Alice Whealey, ‘Hippolytus’ Lost *De Universo* and *De Resurrectione*: Some New Hypotheses’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 50 (1996), 244–256; eadem, ‘Pseudo-Justin’s *De Resurrectione*: Athenagoras or Hippolytus?’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 60 (2006), 420–430.

⁷ Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 203–221. A weak spot in his arguments is that he limits his stylistic comparison to Justin, Pseudo-Justin, Athenagoras and Pseudo-Athenagoras.

⁸ *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione: Discorso cristiano del II secolo*, ed. Alberto D’Anna (Brescia, 2001), 112–128, 286–287.

period, most notably from Celsus' sneering comments on 'the hope of worms'.⁹

The aim of the present article is not to settle this issue, but to explore how the use of Hellenistic philosophy (specifically natural philosophy and epistemology) in *De resurrectione* fits the author's task of defending and reinforcing the disputed doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh, and how this use is related to the actual philosophy of the time.

1. The Resurrection of the Flesh and Natural Philosophy

The overarching thesis of *De resurrectione* is that the flesh is saved in the resurrection. This is argued in three sub-theses, preceded by the refutation of sophistries of the opponents. According to them, the flesh will rise either complete or incomplete, both with undesirable consequences: the presence of genitals or the incapability of God. The author brings the first problem back to one point, namely that the existence of body parts necessarily means that they are working, which is refuted with the examples of barrenness and virginity. The second problem is addressed by the assertion that the healings of Jesus show that bodies will not rise incomplete.¹⁰

Then the author proceeds with a positive, orderly proof of the resurrection of the flesh. The first sub-thesis is that the reconstitution of the flesh is [p. 137]

possible. This nicely fits the main objection against the resurrection of the flesh, formulated by Celsus as follows: '[...] It is impossible [...]. For what sort of body, completely and utterly destroyed, could return to its original nature and to that same first constitution from which it was dissolved?'¹¹ It is exactly this problem, in similar wording, that is taken up by the author of *De resurrectione*, when he reproduces the following statement: 'For it is impossible that this flesh, being destroyed and dissolved in small particles, is gathered together into the same unit.'¹²

The second sub-thesis is that the flesh, as the handiwork of God, is worthy of salvation. Again Celsus' objections come to mind: for him, God is not able to raise the despicable flesh, because that would be a shameful act,

⁹ Celsus as cited by Origen, *Contra Celsum* 5.14.

¹⁰ Ps.Just. *Res.* 2.5-13; 3.1-4.6.

¹¹ Or. *Cels.* 5.14: [...] ἀδύνατον [...]· ποῖον γὰρ σῶμα πάντα διαφθαρέν οἷόν τε ἐπανελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς φύσιν καὶ αὐτὴν ἐκείνην, ἐξ ἧς ἐλύθη, τὴν πρώτην σύστασιν; Origène, *Contre Celse*, ed. Marcel Borret, Sources chrétiennes 132, 136, 147, 150, 227 (Paris, 1967–1976).

¹² Ps.Just. *Res.* 2.2: ἀδύνατον γὰρ εἶναι τὴν φθειρομένην καὶ διὰ λεπτῶν λυομένην ταύτην συναχθῆναι εἰς τὸ αὐτό.

against reason and thus against God self. The opponents in *De resurrectione* argue similarly that the flesh is sinful and not worthy of resurrection.¹³

Finally, in the third sub-thesis the author argues against those who doubt that the flesh has the promise of resurrection. The first reaction of the author is to ask if we want to accuse God of creating the world in vain if only a part of the human being will be saved. But ‘the Reason of the universe is not foolish’, and therefore the flesh is included in salvation.¹⁴

The elaboration of the first statement – that the reconstitution of the flesh is possible – is a fundamental part of *De resurrectione* and stands out in its explicit discussion of strategy and the use of exclusively ‘worldly arguments’ (λόγοι κοσμικοί). In the fifth chapter, the author begins to drive his Christian opponents into a corner by arguing that they do not believe in the power of their own god, in which respect they even believe less than unbelievers about their gods. Then he proceeds as follows:

(5) 11 But now we try to demonstrate that the resurrection of the flesh is possible, asking from the children of the truth to judge kindly when we even engage in arguments of this world, which appear to belong to those outside; 12 firstly because there is nothing outside of God, not even the world itself – for it is his work –, secondly because we engage in these arguments with unbelievers in view. 13 Let me explain that. If we had believing unbelievers in view, it would suffice to answer: ‘We believe.’ But now it is necessary to proceed by means of demonstrations. 14 It is true, the mentioned proofs would be enough to demonstrate the possibility of the resurrection of the flesh, 15 but because they are very unbelieving, we will bring forward the argument not from the faith – for they do not belong to that –, but, in order that it is all the more compelling, from the unbelief, their mother, I mean of course the worldly [p. 138]

arguments. 16 For if we demonstrate from these that the resurrection of the flesh is possible, they are doubtlessly worthy of much shame if they are able to follow neither the arguments of the faith nor of the world.¹⁵

The author distinguishes between three arenas of discussion. Firstly ‘the children of the truth’, who have their faith as proof, as the author has argued in the prologue (to which I will return in the next section). Next, ‘believing unbelievers’: those who believe that gods can do everything, and for whom it is sufficient to say that you believe God can raise the flesh. The proofs (τεκμήρια) of creation and procreation mentioned earlier in the fifth chapter belong here. But the third group, those who are ‘very unbelieving’, require a demonstration (ἀπόδειξις) comprising only worldly arguments. The author justifies his involvement with the arguments of ‘those outside’ towards ‘the children of the truth’, firstly, with the reminder that there is nothing

¹³ Ps.Just. Res. 7.

¹⁴ Ps.Just. Res. 8–9.

¹⁵ Ps.Just. Res. 5.11–16. The elaboration of the first sub-thesis covers 5.2–6.18.

outside of God, implicating that worldly arguments cannot contradict the truth. In the second place, he seeks common ground in worldly arguments in order to be more compelling, not so much with the goal to persuade the opponents, but rather to put them to shame in the minds of those who doubt, by showing that the opponents are beyond reason.

The need of an explicit justification of the use of exclusively worldly arguments is consistent with the fact that this strategy goes beyond the carefully constructed epistemological position formulated in the prologue. This bold move strengthens the position of the author by not closing off to the world, but claiming the rationality of the world, God's world after all, as a powerful ally. Among the defenders of the resurrection of the flesh in this period the author of *De resurrectione* distinguishes itself by casting a fundamental part of his treatise in the form of a demonstration that intentionally invokes only the very philosophy that usually despised the defended doctrine. Some scholars have called this move revolutionary.¹⁶ It must be noted, however, that the *idea* of the argument that the reconstruction of the dissolved body is possible according to the philosophies of Plato and Pythagoras, is already found in the *Legatio* of Athenagoras.¹⁷ The strategy of our author is, in any case, an indication of the search for common ground with contemporary knowledge and shows an openness to rationality that is characteristic for the emergence of Christian theology.¹⁸

The demonstration itself consists of a summary of the natural philosophy of three main schools of philosophy: Platonism, Stoicism and Epicureanism. The common doctrine which they all endorse is that the elements (τὰ στοιχεῖα), from which everything originates, are imperishable. Then, God is compared to respectively a sculptor, a metallurgist and a mosaic-making artist, who, after

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an entity has been dissolved into its elements, can restore it to the same form as it was before. The author claims that in this way it is sufficiently proven that the resurrection of the flesh is possible 'according to the gentiles'.¹⁹ He does not discuss the philosophical doctrines in depth, but only in so far as it suits his purpose.²⁰ The source of the information about the philosophical schools was probably doxographical literature in one form or another, as the parallel descriptions of the respective philosophies in the famous work of Diogenes Laertius and in Hippolytus' *Refutatio omnium*

¹⁶ See Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 168.

¹⁷ Athenagoras, *Legatio* 36.3.

¹⁸ See Eric Osborn, *The Emergence of Christian Theology* (Cambridge, 1993), 287.

¹⁹ Ps.Just. *Res.* 6.1–18.

²⁰ Compare the explicit mention of this method in Athenag. *Leg.* 6.3.

haeresium attest.²¹ That our author perceived the philosophical world through the lens of this kind of literature, is clear from the example of the description of Plato's natural philosophy as having two universal principles, god's providence and matter. This is also the case in Diogenes Laertius' description, whereas Plato in his *Timaeus* (30b–c) only mentions the creative act of god's providence, not matter.

Recapitulatory statements in the works of the physician Galen also provide interesting parallels to Pseudo-Justin's understanding of the nature of the body. 'All bodies that admit of generation and destruction' consist of elements, the least parts of something.²² 'All physicians and philosophers' think that the body consists of 'the elements, whatever they may be.' Galen mentions Asclepiades (solid masses and the passages between them), Epicurus (atoms), Anaxagoras (homoeomeries), and Chrysippus and all the Stoics, together with Aristotle, Theophrastus, Plato, and Hippocrates (hot, cold, dry, and wet).²³ Elsewhere Galen recalls, besides other schools of thought, the doctrine of Empedocles on the elements and compares his view on the mixture of the four primary elements in the body with making a refined mix of four metals.²⁴ Pseudo-Justin uses the term 'element' in the same way as Galen for whatever was thought to be the smallest part from which everything is constituted, including the body. And he uses the same imagery of the mixing of four metals. In a more general sense, Pseudo-Justin's approach to natural philosophy corresponds to Galen's insistence on knowledge of the elements of

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the body, and to the importance Galen attributed to universal agreement.²⁵ There is, however, an important difference, which attests to the somewhat superficial character of Pseudo-Justin's treatment. Galen, following the Stoic position of Chrysippus, explicitly denied that the elements are imper-

²¹ For Plato, see Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum* 3.69 and Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 1.19.1. For Epicurus, see D.L. 10.38, 43, 46 and Hippol. *Haer.* 1.22.1–2. For the sources of Hippolytus, see Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' Elenchos as a Source for Greek Philosophy*, Philosophia Antiqua 56 (Leiden, 1992).

²² Galenus, *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* 8.2.1–3. Galen, *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, ed. Phillip de Lacy, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum V 4.1.2, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1984). See also Galenus, *De elementis ex Hippocratis sententia* 1.1; 8.5. Galen, *On the Elements according to Hippocrates*, ed. Phillip de Lacy, CMG V 1.2 (Berlin, 1996).

²³ Gal. *P.H.P.* 5.3.17–18.

²⁴ Galenus, *In Hippocratis de natura hominis* 1.3. Galeni *In Hippocratis de natura hominis [...]*, ed. Johannes Mewaldt [...], CMG V 9.1 (Leipzig, 1914). Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 163 points out this parallel.

²⁵ Jonathan Barnes, 'Galen on Logic and Therapy', in: Fridolf Kudlien and Richard J. Durling (eds.), *Galen's Method of Healing: Proceedings of the 1982 Symposium*, Studies in Ancient Medicine 1 (Leiden, 1991), 50–102, at 78–79 and 93.

ishable (ἄφθαρτα), as Pseudo-Justin would have it.²⁶ Galen distinguished between elements, ‘bodies’ that have the extreme form of one of the four principle qualities, and the underlying eternal matter, being ungenerated and imperishable. The four elements originate when matter is ‘informed’ by the four principal qualities.²⁷

Crucial for Pseudo-Justin’s argument is the assertion that there is agreement about the doctrine that ‘there is neither coming into being from not being, nor dissolving and perishing into not being.’²⁸ In another summarizing statement, Galen reports that in his (now lost) work *De demonstratione* he discussed that the philosophers of old discerned a class of things that are indemonstrable truths, among which the proposition ‘that everything comes from some existing thing, while nothing comes from something that does not exist at all. So too, [they say that] nothing is destroyed to what is completely nonexistent.’²⁹ Heimgartner’s assertion that Pseudo-Justin is clearly dependent on Epicurus’ wording of this doctrine,³⁰ may be true, but Galen’s remarks prove that the doctrine itself was understood to be a κοινὸν δόγμα.

All in all, the author of *De resurrectione* formulates an answer to the rhetorical questions that asserted the impossibility of the resurrection of the flesh. He succeeds, at the very least, in generating the impression that the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh is compatible with the main schools of natural philosophy. Of course, even if the physical possibility of the resurrection of the flesh would be accepted, the question whether it is a reasonable thing for God to do would still be open. Philosophers certainly would have objected to a god who irrationally restores the prison of the soul, or who concerns himself with humankind at all. But the author of *De resurrectione* works with the concept of the Creator-God inherited from Christian tradition and Judaism, which he elaborates in his subsequent treatment of the value of the flesh. For the intended audience, the proof of the

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possibility of the resurrection of the flesh according to Hellenistic philosophy has the function of convincing them that this doctrine is not as irration-

²⁶ Ps.Just. *Res.* 6.4, 11.

²⁷ D.L. 7.134 (Chrysippus); Gal. *Hipp. elem.* 6.38-40. Franjo Kovačić, *Der Begriff der Physis bei Galen vor dem Hintergrund seiner Vorgänger*, Philosophie der Antike 12 (Stuttgart, 2001), 97–98. See also Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 162.

²⁸ Ps.Just. *Res.* 6.4: τὸ μήτε ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος γίνεσθαι μήτε εἰς τὸ μὴ ὄν ἀναλύεσθαι καὶ ἀπόλλυσθαι.

²⁹ Galenus, *De methodo medendi* 1.4: καὶ πάντ’ ἐξ ὄντος τινὸς, ἐκ δὲ τοῦ μηδὲν ὄντος οὐδέν· οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ φθείρεσθαι μηδὲν εἰς τὸ τέως οὐκ ὄν. Translation from: Galen, *Method of Medicine*, vol. 1: *Books 1-4*, ed. Ian Johnston and G.H.R. Horsley, Loeb Classical Library 516 (Cambridge, 2011).

³⁰ See D.L. 10.38 (Epicurus), and Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 160.

al and intellectually absurd as the opponents say it is. In fact, the author pictures the opponents as irrational for not even being able to follow the doctrines of the world.

2. Christian and Hellenistic Epistemology

In the prologue or proem of *De resurrectione* the subject of the treatise – the resurrection of the flesh – is not mentioned. Instead, it begins with the following declaration:

(1) 1 The Word of the Truth is free and sovereign, not willing to be accessible to any test of refutation, or to abide patiently the examination by way of demonstration with its hearers. 2 For its nobleness and trustworthiness want that the one who sent it is believed himself. 3 A Word of Truth is sent by God. 4 Therefore also the freedom with which it is surrounded is not vulgar. For it (the Word of Truth), being brought forward with authority, does reasonably not want that demonstrations are asked for what is said, because there are no other proofs apart from the Truth itself – and God is precisely that.

In short, the message (λόγος) of the truth is beyond negative or positive proof, because it carries the proof in itself. The idea that God's truth transcends demonstration and commands faith because of its trustworthiness, is already found in the works of Justin and Athenagoras.³¹ Moreover, the motif of introducing an apology by stating that it is in fact unnecessary is a common rhetorical ploy. But that Pseudo-Justin has a particular axe to grind becomes clear by his use of the word φορτικός (vulgar, low). It reflects the criticisms of philosophers like Galen and Celsus, who thought of Christians as simple-minded people with blind faith in undemonstrated doctrines, using expressions such as 'Do not examine, but believe.'³² Resorting to belief as a strategy of defence certainly occurred in early Christian circles.³³ In the *Epistula ad Rheginum* resurrection is viewed as a matter of belief, not of persuading: philosophers cannot contribute anything useful to the discussion.³⁴ In contrast to such an opposing stance towards rational inquiry, [p. 142]

³¹ Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 7.2; Athenag. *Leg.* 7.2; 9.1; 11.1; 12.3. See D'Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione*, 184–185 on the affinity between Just. *Dial.* and Ps. Just. *Res.* on this point.

³² Celsus as cited in Or. *Cels.* 1.9; compare 1.13, 18; 3.44, 50; and Gal. *De puls. diff.* 2.4; 3.3; see also Luc. *Peregr.* 13 and D'Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione*, 182–183.

³³ See for instance Apelles in Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 5.13.5.

³⁴ *Epistula ad Rheginum* 46.3–20. M.L. Peel (ed.), 'NHC 1,4: The Treatise on the Resurrection', in: Harold W. Attridge (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codex I (The Jung Codex): Introductions, Texts, Translations, Indices*, Nag Hammadi Studies 22 (Leiden, 1985), 123–157.

Pseudo-Justin argues that freedom over against proof is not characteristic of credulous simpletons, but follows reasonably from the authoritative nature of the truth itself. He proceeds with an epistemological justification:

(1) 5 Every proof namely is stronger and more believable than what is proven. Indeed, what is not believed at first, before the proof has arrived, finds belief when that is provided and it appears to be as is said. 6 But nothing is stronger and more believable than the truth. Therefore, someone who asks proof for this is like someone who wants that what appears to the senses is demonstrated by reason that it appears. 7 For sense perception is criterion of what is apprehended through reason, but there is no criterion for sense perception except itself. 8 Well, just as we what is seized through reason bring before the senses and judge of what nature what is said actually is, true or false, and judge no longer because we believe the senses, in the same way we send the arguments about men and the world up to the Truth and judge with it whether they are wrong or not, but we judge the words of the Truth with nothing else, because we believe it.

The author states, firstly, that a demonstration always rests on what is stronger and more believable, and what is stronger and more believable than the truth? He draws, in the second place, a parallel with sense perception as the ultimate criterion whether statements are true or false.

After having established that belief in the truth is not irrational, Pseudo-Justin finally fills the reader in with the Christian specifics of this general theory. The λόγος of the Truth is identified with the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is himself guarantee (πίστις) and proof. Therefore, those who acknowledge that, have their faith (πίστις) as proof. And because the Son came in the flesh and gave in himself the resurrection from the dead, it is implied that there must not be any doubt about the resurrection of the flesh.³⁵

Scholars who have studied *De resurrectione* have paid little or no attention to the fact that the theory of πίστις found in the works of Clement of Alexandria is closely related to the ideas expressed in the prologue of our treatise.³⁶ Clement's concern is to salvage πίστις as an intellectually reputable term over against Valentinians, who considered πίστις inferior to γνῶσις, and over against the contempt of the (Middle) Platonists for πίστις as blind faith in undemonstrated doctrines. How does Clement rehabilitate πίστις? First of all, the science of demonstration depends on what is prior and better known. But unless we admit an infinite regress, there must be

³⁵ Ps.Just. *Res.* 1.9-11.

³⁶ Parallels with Clement are noted by Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 83-86. See also Matyáš Havrda, 'Demonstrative Method in *Stromateis* VII: Context, Principles and Purpose', in: Matyáš Havrda, Vít Hušek, and Jana Plátová (eds.), *The Seventh Book of the Stromateis: Proceedings of the Colloquium on Clement of Alexandria (Olomouc, October 21-23, 2010)*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 117 (Leiden, 2012), 261-275, at 262-263.

first principles at the basis of our knowledge that are not demonstrable. Nothing precedes the Unbegotten, so that the ultimate indemonstrable first principle is God, only knowable

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through belief in his λόγος. This first principle carries its proof in itself.³⁷ In Clement's own words:

What has to be judged is not to be trusted before it is judged, so that what is in need of judgment cannot be a first principle. Accordingly, while we reasonably grasp the indemonstrable first principle by faith, and receive from the first principle itself demonstrations concerning the first principle in abundance, we are educated by the voice of the Lord towards the knowledge of the truth.³⁸

For Clement, πίστις has become the cornerstone of his epistemology. The λόγος, apprehended by faith, is used as a criterion in the search for facts. Therefore, πίστις without proof is not only appropriate for the uneducated, it is the precondition of any stable knowledge: 'Faith is superior to knowledge, and its criterion.'³⁹

Just as Pseudo-Justin, Clement makes 'an analogy between faith in the indemonstrable first principle and sensation as a basis for knowledge.'⁴⁰ He refers to Aristotle's successor Theophrastus, who said that sense perception is the beginning (ἀρχή) of faith. Accordingly, faith in the Scriptures provides a sure judgment and undeniable proof.⁴¹

It appears that Clement and the author of *De resurrectione* conceptualize the relation of faith, truth and knowledge in a very similar manner, although Clement's treatment is more extensive and profound.⁴² The epistemological justification in *De resurrectione* agrees with Clement's theory of πίστις in at least three aspects. Firstly, the analogy made between sense perception as faculty of judgment, and truth as faculty of judgment. In the second place, both authors share the idea that there must be a first principle that commands faith, because proof is always stronger than what is proven. Finally, the ultimate first principle is the truth, which is to be identified as God.

³⁷ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2.(4.)13.4–14.3; 2.(5.)24.2–3; 5.(12.)82.3–4; 7.(16.)95.4–6.

³⁸ Clem. Alex., *Str.* 7.(16.)95.5–6. Clemens Alexandrinus, vol. 2: *Stromata Buch I–VI*, and vol. 3: *Stromata Buch VII und VIII [...]*, ed. L. Früchtel, Otto Stählin, and Ursula Treu, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* 52 (15), 17 (Berlin, 3rd edn. 1960, and 2nd edn. 1970).

³⁹ Clem. Alex. *Str.* 2.(4.)15.5; compare 1.(1.)8.2; 2.(4.)12.1; and see particularly 2.(2.)8.1–9.7.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth A. Clark, *Clement's Use of Aristotle: The Aristotelian Contribution to Clement of Alexandria's Refutation of Gnosticism* (New York, 1977), 20.

⁴¹ Clem. Alex. *Str.* 2.(2.)9.5–6.

⁴² Havrda, 'Demonstrative Method', 262.

On the basis of *De resurrectione* alone, scholars have noted that its epistemological position has similarities with the Stoic and Epicurean notion of ‘preconception’ (πρόληψις) as a criterion of truth and starting point of demonstration.⁴³ But in light of Clement’s analogous treatment of this matter it is possible to shed more light on the philosophical context. Clement indeed discusses the term ‘preconception’, and also the Stoic term ‘assent’ (συγκα-

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τάθεσις), to provide philosophical parallels to the Christian meaning of πίστις. However, these terms are reinterpreted by him to fit them into the framework of his main source of ideas about πίστις and proof: Aristotle and his school.⁴⁴ In the case of the first two points of agreement between *De resurrectione* and Clement (mentioned above), the latter explicitly calls upon the authority of Aristotle and Theophrastus.⁴⁵ Aristotle, in order to solve the problem of infinite regress, had to assume that there are undemonstrated principles at the end of the dialectic process, first principles that are self-evident and command faith. As is extensively discussed in the scholarly literature, Clement’s defence of πίστις as an intellectually responsible act is largely dependent on Aristotle and the Peripatetic school.⁴⁶ There are, of course, important differences. The first has to do with the third point of agreement between *De resurrectione* and Clement: God as the ultimate first principle. Clement links πίστις to an ontological first principle, God, whereas the Aristotelian πίστις relates to logical first principles. Also, in the school of Aristotle πίστις does not have a particular technical meaning, but Clement transformed this term into a central concept of his epistemology.⁴⁷

The fact that Clement’s epistemology has been influenced by Aristotle, does not necessarily implicate that Clement had direct access to the writings of the philosopher. His knowledge of Aristotelian logic was, as it seems, primarily mediated by the tradition of the schools, which at the time were involved in extensive epistemological discussions about the criteria of the

⁴³ D.L. 7.52, 54; Aetius, *Placita* 4.11 (Stoicism); D.L. 10.33, 38 (Epicurus). See Heimgartner, *Pseudojustin, Über die Auferstehung*, 135.

⁴⁴ Clem. Alex. *Str.* 2.(2.)8.1–9.7; 2.(4.)16.3; 2.(12.)55.1. Clark, *Clement’s Use of Aristotle*, 20–21; Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d’Alexandrie* (Leiden, 1973), 115, 119; Salvatore R.C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford, 1971), 127–131.

⁴⁵ For example, Clem. Alex. *Str.* 2.(2.)9.5–6; 2.(4.)15.5.

⁴⁶ Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 120–123; Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse*, 109–125; Georgia Apostolopoulou, *Die Dialektik bei Klemens von Alexandria: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der philosophischen Methoden*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 20.29 (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), 87–98; Clark, *Clement’s Use of Aristotle*, 17–18.

⁴⁷ Clark, *Clement’s Use of Aristotle*, 21–23.

truth.⁴⁸ Lilla points especially to parallels between Clement and the Middle Platonist philosophers Antiochus of Askalon and Albinus (i.e. Alcinous).⁴⁹ There may be, however, another candidate that shows much affinity with the epistemology of *De resurrectione* and Clement: the great second century physician-philosopher Galen. It is certain that in the beginning of the third century the Roman followers of Theodotus the Shoemaker were studying the logic of Aristotle and Theophrastus in order to put Christian beliefs in the form of demonstrations. These Christians held Galen in very high esteem.⁵⁰ There are good reasons to suspect that the interest in Galen was not limited to this peculiar group. Recently Matyáš Havrda has argued that the underlying source

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for the notes on demonstration in the so-called eighth book of the *Stromata* can be identified as Galen's lost work *De demonstratione*.⁵¹ If this is true, Galen is the missing link between Aristotle and Clement. For almost all the arguments about demonstration that are integretated in the seven books of the *Stromata*, can be found in this appended collection of notes: that demonstration is always depending on what is better known, that every demonstration therefore leads to first principles that are believable of itself (τὰ ἐξ αὐτῶν πιστά), that these principles ask for indemonstrable faith, and that sense perception and intelligence are alternative starting points for demonstration.⁵² The connection of this type of epistemology with the philosophy of Galen has also been substantiated by Alberto D'Anna in his study of *De resurrectione*.⁵³

Aristotle, Theophrastus, and the Peripatetics distinguished between two classes of things, namely what is perceptible and what is intelligible. The criterion of truth is what is evident to respectively sense perception or the intellect.⁵⁴ Galen, who thought 'that the best accounts of scientific demonstration were written by the old philosophers, Theophrastus and Aristotle',⁵⁵ followed them in this respect:

The philosophers of old, in turn, say there is a twofold class of things that are apparent (phenomena): one component [...] comprises those things discerned by a sense,

⁴⁸ See Gisela Striker, *Κριτήριο τῆς ἀληθείας* (Göttingen, 1974).

⁴⁹ Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria*, 125–131.

⁵⁰ Reported by an anonymous source of Eusebius, *H.E.* 5.28.

⁵¹ Matyáš Havrda, 'Galenus Christianus? The Doctrine of Demonstration in *Stromata* VIII and the Question of its Source', *Vigiliae Christianae* 65 (2011), 343–375.

⁵² See especially Clem. Alex. *Str.* 8.(3.)7.1–3; 8.(4.)9.1.

⁵³ D'Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione*, 191–202.

⁵⁴ Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* 7.217–218. See also R.J. Hankinson, 'A Purely Verbal Dispute? Galen on Stoic and Academic Epistemology', *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 45 (1991), 267–300, at 271.

⁵⁵ Gal. *P.H.P.* 2.2.4. All translations of *P.H.P.* are from De Lacy.

such as whiteness or blackness, hardness or softness, hot or cold, and suchlike, while the other comprises those things which fall under the intellect at their first apprehension and are indemonstrable [...].⁵⁶

This summary is followed by a reference to *De demonstratione*. Galen does not become tired of repeating ‘that the demonstration of every opinion goes back to logical beginnings.’⁵⁷ A premiss must be evident to the senses and to the mind, ‘so as to be primary and credible in itself (ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ πιστόν).’⁵⁸ In *De optimo docendi genere* Galen opts, over against skepticism, for judging the truth of arguments in order to make clear what their nature is and to investigate whether they are true or false. That is possible with the natural criterion of sense perception, but, because it is impossible to judge the very criterion with which everything else is judged, you have no other choice than

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to believe or not to believe the criterion.⁵⁹ These statements are very close parallels of the epistemological remarks of the prologue of *De resurrectione*.

The affinity between both approaches gains even more profile by taking into account Galen’s distinctive philosophical position. Although he values both reason and experience, he has more confidence in the latter: findings of the rational method should, wherever possible, be checked against perception and experience. According to him, the disagreements among philosophers about cosmological and theological matters are the result of the fact that there is no judgment possible with an empirical test, with clear sense perception. Therefore, this speculative philosophy is useless and has no practical value.⁶⁰ In the prologue of *De resurrectione*, however, the natural criterion of sense perception is not accompanied by the limited human λόγος, but by the λόγος of the Truth, which provides certainty from above that exceeds the natural method of knowledge. Alberto D’Anna states: the Word of Truth intervenes where knowledge in the Galenic sense ends.⁶¹

The epistemology of Clement of Alexandria and the author of *De resurrectione* seems, compared with the philosophy of the time, to have much in

⁵⁶ Gal. *M.M.* 1.4. Translation of Johnston and Horsley.

⁵⁷ So, for example, Gal. *P.H.P.* 9.8.1.

⁵⁸ Gal. *P.H.P.* 2.5.5. See also *Hipp. elem.* 2.33.

⁵⁹ Galen, *De optimo docendi genere* 2.1–5; 3.1–2; 4.2. Galeno, *Sull’ottima maniera d’insegnare [...]*, ed. Adelmo Barigazzi, CMG V 1.1 (Berlin, 1991).

⁶⁰ See for example Gal. *M.M.* 1.4; 2.7; 4.3; and especially Gal. *P.H.P.* 9.6.21–22; 9.7.9–18. Michael Frede, ‘On Galen’s Epistemology’, in: Vivian Nutton (ed.), *Galen: Problems and Prospects* ([London], 1981), 65–86, at 81–85. See also D’Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione*, 194.

⁶¹ ‘[...] la parola della Verità interviene laddove si arresta la scienza, nel senso galenico del termine.’ D’Anna, *Pseudo-Giustino, Sulla resurrezione*, 202.

common with Galen's theory of knowledge, who on his turn followed mainly Aristotle, Theophrastus and the Peripatetics. The distinctive contribution of Clement and the author of *De resurrectione* is to have interpreted πίστις in God in the light of the philosophical trust in first principles, which are beyond demonstration. By integrating the revelation of the truth in a philosophical system they attempted to solve the problem of the intellectual contempt for blind faith. Raoul Mortley writes: 'Clément, pour la première fois réussit à réaliser une synthèse entre la *pistis* de la philosophie et la *pistis* de la religion chrétienne.'⁶² The same could be said about the author of *De resurrectione*, because the exact relation between Clement and Pseudo-Justin is still an open question.

Conclusion

Pseudo-Justin's *De resurrectione* is aimed at the 'weak', who doubt the resurrection of the flesh and run the risk of falling prey to the devil. On two major points the author uses Hellenistic philosophy to strengthen his case. The prologue, which has the function of a theological prolegomenon, sets out

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the author's view on the relation of truth, proof and belief. Shaped in the philosophical language of the time, it provides a synthesis of the Christian understanding of faith and Hellenistic epistemology. The closest parallel, apart from Clement of Alexandria's epistemology, is Galen's theory of knowledge, in which trust/belief in the indemonstrable first principles plays a fundamental role, and in which the criterion of sense perception has precedence over the sometimes fallible and speculative reason. Pseudo-Justin complements Galen's epistemology with a revealed criterion, the Word of Truth. The view expressed in the prologue has the intention of silencing accusations of anti-intellectualism. The message to those who are hesitating to accept a doctrine that supposedly demands blind faith, is that faith is not a simplistic alternative for proof, but carries the proof in itself.

Viewed from the perspective of the dominant intellectual culture, the idea of the resurrection of the flesh is deviant. It is, therefore, a bold move that the author of *De resurrectione* does not hesitate to claim the support of Greek natural philosophy. His strategy, in this case explicitly explained and justified, is to defeat the opponents on what they think is their own terrain. For nothing is outside of God, not even the arguments of 'those outside'. The opponents appear to be in line with the dominant intellectual culture,

⁶² Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse*, 122.

but in front of the intended audience of doubters they are shown to be ultimate outsiders, not even capable of understanding worldly arguments. In other words, by his attempt to prove the possibility of the resurrection of the flesh on the basis of natural philosophy the author reduces the deviance of his own view and hopes to take away the attractiveness of the opposing position. The author of *De resurrectione*, therefore, uses Hellenistic philosophy as an (in this case) unexpected, but powerful ally to turn the tables on his opponents in order to get the upper hand. By connecting with the status and respectability of philosophy he tries to gain power over the boundary and to bring the 'weak' into the safety zone of the Word of Truth.